GLOBAL ALLSTARS

An exhibition review by Ashley Cook

DECEMBER 15, 2023

and a Presentation by Juan Diego Covarrubias

FICTIONAL DYNAMICS:
MICROTUBULAR WEB CASTLES OF POIESI

On September 1, 2023, Celma Project Space + Sucesiva hosted a conference to discuss their most recent exhibition ***FICTIONAL DYNAMICS: Microtubular web castles of poiesi*** by Juan Diego Covarrubias. They invited the public to learn about this work which is diverse in its approach to installation and use of material. The visual elements bounce from painting to ceramic to diagrams as digital prints to diagrams on digital screens occupying the walls and the floors. The presence of technological devices, like lasers and televisions that interact directly or indirectly with the art, produces something like a scene from a science-fiction film, challenging our impulse to see these works as typical abstract artworks. This contention between tradition and trial is modest yet conceptually crucial in order to satisfy the artist's intent to scientifically investigate art-making as an semi-conscious mechanical act done to "elucidate truths that exist independently of human understanding."

Juan Diego is a young-millennial artist based in Guadalajara whose practice is concerned with perception and the internet's particular influence on its malleability. He utilizes online platforms as material to create illusions the same way a landscape painter uses paint to convince us that we have entered into the frame. He highlights our readiness to believe, and uses it to forge living tales that envelope its audience without them even knowing. ***FICTIONAL DYNAMICS*** is a story of an artist who was autonomous in their pursuit to create art solely as a way to access a sort-of aesthetic rulebook of quantum physics. His experiments are discovered by a technological research company called Nanoxis Corp, who sought the opportunity to observe his creative methods as investigations into the mind's trance/flow state. The turbulence of the relationship between the artist Juan and this corporation is narrated from start to finish online at https://nanoxiscorp.blogspot.com. The information revealed at this blog sets the stage for the audience's specific interpretation of the show and invites their participation as recipients of some sort of classified information during the conference. Like Orson Wells' 1938 radio broadcast The War of the Worlds, the fiction is so obscured that the reality is hardly questioned.

Juan Diego Covarrubias' investigation into mind through his art practice is ongoing and can be witnessed as well by his piece published by runner magazine in December of 2021. In *The Beast*, Juan introduces and reflects on a series of fantasy drawings about personal archetypes from his subconscious that were brought about by a psychedelic experience. There is a consistency that can be observed here through acknowledging the importance of the process as a performance, the work as a living narrative. From planning to producing to presenting, every facet is an indispensable detail of a story.

The fascination with psychic automatism found throughout history is usually fueled by a philosophy that favors spirituality over strategy and curiosity over control. Invested thinkers of this realm include names like Ursula Blum and Hilma af Klint who actively sought mystical events through their creative practices. Juan Diego Covarrubias is an artist that exists at the edge of this timeline, bringing this way of working into the present day but doing so inside a meta-narrative framework that not only allows for the freedom to create in this way but to also scrutinize the value of mysticism as it relates to the concerns of our contemporary world.

In the following pages, Juan Diego Covarrubias presents an excerpt from the conference that reveals details about the creative process that was used to produce the work in the exhibition.

Sucesiva is an independent gallery that works with young emerging artists in Mexico City and facilitates sales of their work. Learn about them at www.instagram.com/sucesiva

Implosión 1.1

Concavo

Expansión

Orchestrated Objective Reduction 1,2 and 3 from left to right

Orchestrated Objective Reduction 5

Frascos y documentos secretos

Nanoxis Quantum Vacuum

[Extract from the conference

“Fictional Dynamics: Microtubular Web Castles of Poiesi”

conducted inside the premises of Celma Project Space and organized by Sucesiva - Ciudad de México (09-01-2023)]:

I’m going to give you a brief summary of how I created these pieces, but first, I must mention that what I’m about to explain might be committed by the interests of another party that won’t be too happy about this being made public. However, no one here is in danger, and we’re going to clarify everything after this introduction[1].

I developed an expressionist method that guided me to create abstract work (without promoting Yankee nationalism, do not worry). The reason for abstraction is due to the nature of my references and my approach to them.

I used some fundamental concepts of quantum physics as principles to formulate a mechanic (or praxis), adopting a Platonic perspective on geometry and mathematics as sources that can elucidate truths that exist independently of human understanding. Here’s where Roger Penrose was crucial to me, not only because he’s also a Platonist, but for the theory he developed with anesthesiologist Stuart Hameroff, “orchestrated objective reduction”, which completely changed my approach to the body as a vehicle to access and translate information from the mind.

Implosión 4

What Penrose and Hameroff basically propose is to study understanding as a feature of consciousness that can be examined through cyto-skeletons found inside neurons called microtubules, adopting a quantum approach to the phenomenon instead of thinking of it as a parallelism with computation or something that emerges between the interaction of neurons through synapses.

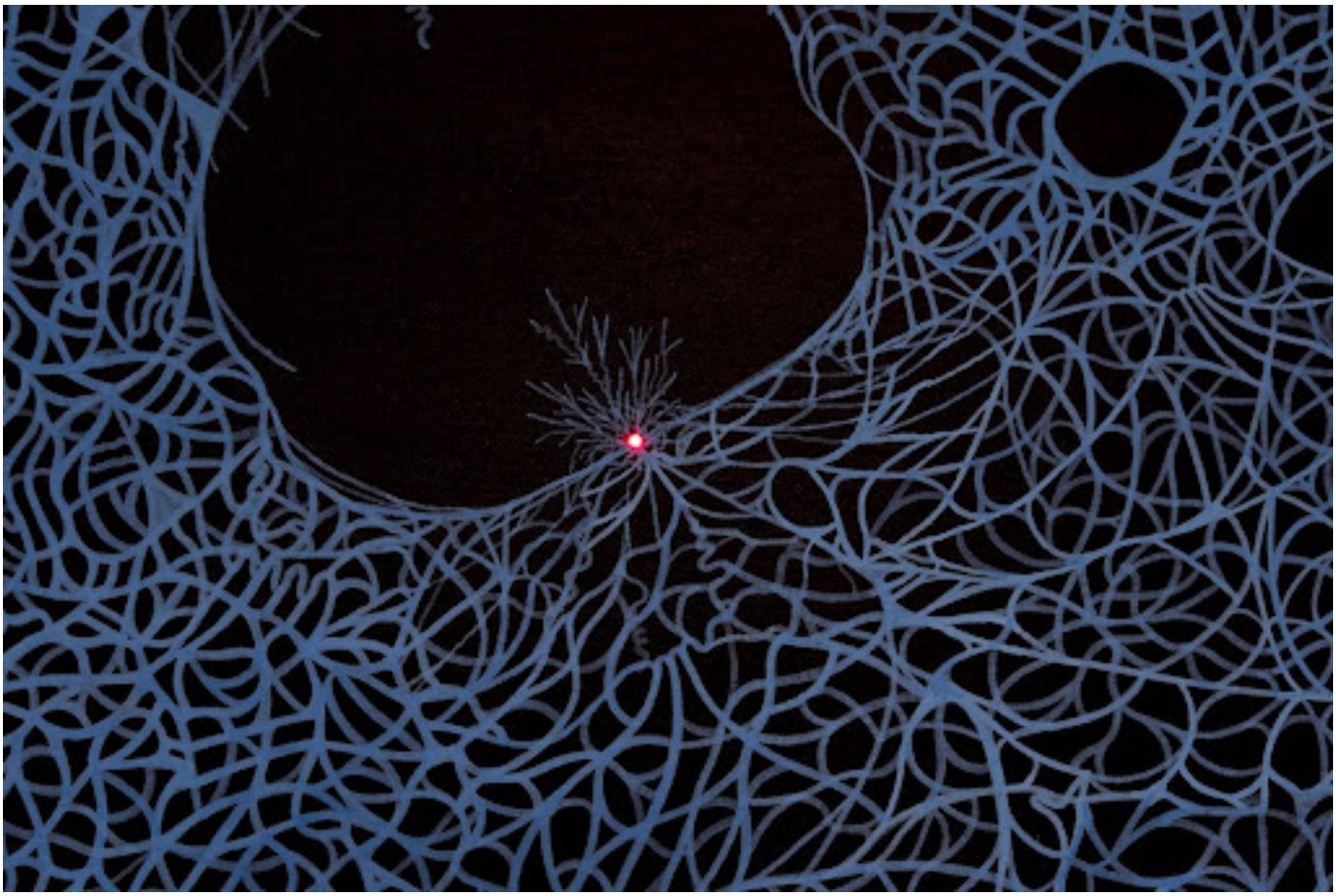
I wonder then, can a guided consciousness, through an induced flow state[2], translate Platonic mathematical entities? What would a topography of the mind look like? Without the influence of a computer in the process of experimentation.

What I did was to induce a trance in each first session of drawing or painting, accompanied by music (as some ancestors of abstract art did), but only as a way to start engagement because what really triggers self-absorption is what I call a “motivational fantasy”: a poetic imaginarium that provokes a strong will to explore, to immerse yourself. For me, it was navigating outer space and observing the beauty of the cosmos.

In this manner, I mixed the rational perspective of science (quantum premises) with the mystical and poetic elements of art (motivational fantasy), having Bertrand Russell as the spokesman behind this decision. I translated those quantum precepts into an expressionistic language.

But before I continue, I think I should dissipate some doubts about what I consider expressionism: for me, it is based on highlighting the act of creating, understanding the performative function of the body, and the spontaneity of consciousness as the constituent elements of poiesis.

When I express this, I inevitably contemplate the concept of collapse, wherein measurement influences the behavior of particles, as demonstrated in the double slit experiment[3]. Or as Niels Bohr put it: “No phenomenon is a phenomenon unless it’s an observed phenomenon.” Perceiving would be a physical act, and this is made evident when you try to measure particles. They abandon their superposition state and fixate their locality at a determined space and time, something that is spontaneous and irreversible, at the speed of light or possibly even greater.



Detaiil from Implosión 1

To begin each piece, I imagine myself in empty space, a kind of vacuum, until that visualization, as a byproduct of a profound concentration, projects where to inscribe the figure of a little star on the extensive black of the paper or canvas. The first trace makes itself present, space is now evident, but then it’s time for time, which is a perpetual motion that has entropy as its phenomenon.

I expand the little edges of the star as the compass of an implosion, while music helps me maintain the fantasy of observing a cosmical body unwrap itself, until a geometrical landscape starts to take shape, with crossed sections that build the appearance of a spider web or Purkinje neurons[4].

The pieces in this exhibition are the record of this ludic, of a language I speak through the “microtubular contact,” but most importantly, it showed me a pattern that you can find in all nature from a method that cues premonition.

An origin and its development could be the simplistic way of describing it, but also wrong. Its complexity resides in the geometrical framework, unpredictable in its intuitive realization and deterministic location of the trace (nothing is erased or corrected during the process of making), an allusion to the Uncertainty Principle and theory of chaos.

A phrase from “The Edges of Fiction” on the poetics of Aristotle; Rancière mentions that fiction is a surfeit of rationality, not a lack of reality. This made me comprehend that fiction is key to understanding, thus an instrument necessary for science too. A tool to look into the world to help us reach new conclusions, even accidentally. It was this excess of rationality that took me to create these pieces, but it also left me with a lot of questions because I don’t really know where to draw the line of the metaphorical.

Either way, I’d like to say that I don’t think the symmetries and patterns you find in these pieces are coincidental. On one hand, I think that physics, like any field, has a historical body of study, conformed by a series of narratives that build up a particular aesthetic that can limit our approach. On the other hand, I don’t discard the notion of an ontology of objects. Not everything is subjective; we get information all the time, and it’s real; the question is how do we intercalate it? How do we frame it without succumbing to an overflow of mysticism or falling into the trap of developing a tautology?

I recognize I have profound and childish doubts, and I’m not ashamed to ask questions nor experiment with my ways of work which use the mind and the body. That’s why I thought it was necessary to induce a trance for this method. Set the conditions, like a physicist isolating space, lowering the noise to generate a vacuum to study the patterns that particles leave behind, with the purpose of finding the threshold that guides you to the constituent blocks of reality.

And I conclude with this phrase:

“My speculation is scientific,
my uneasiness is artistic.

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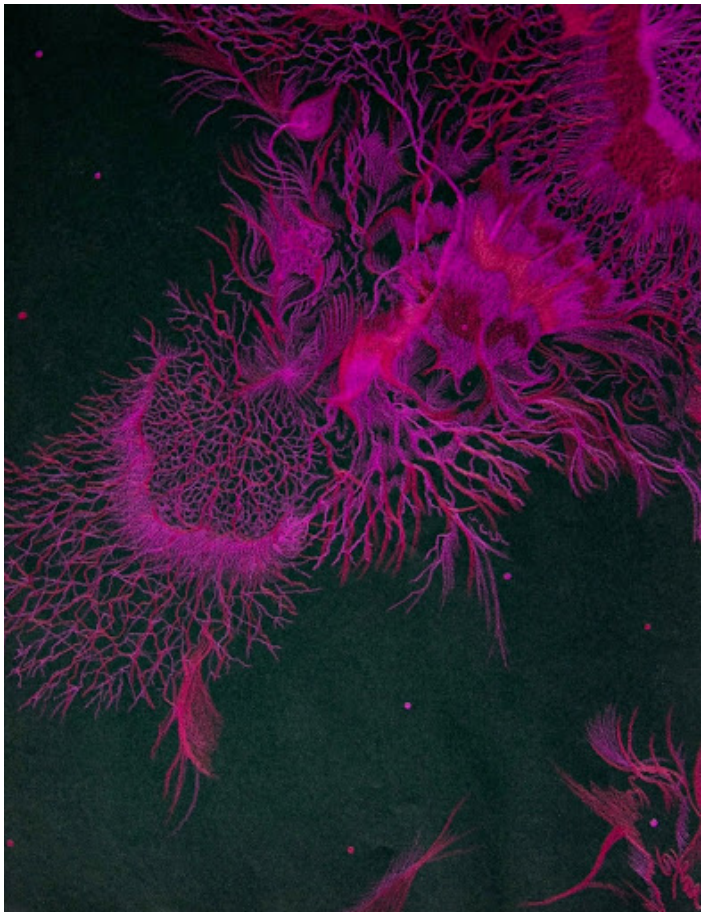
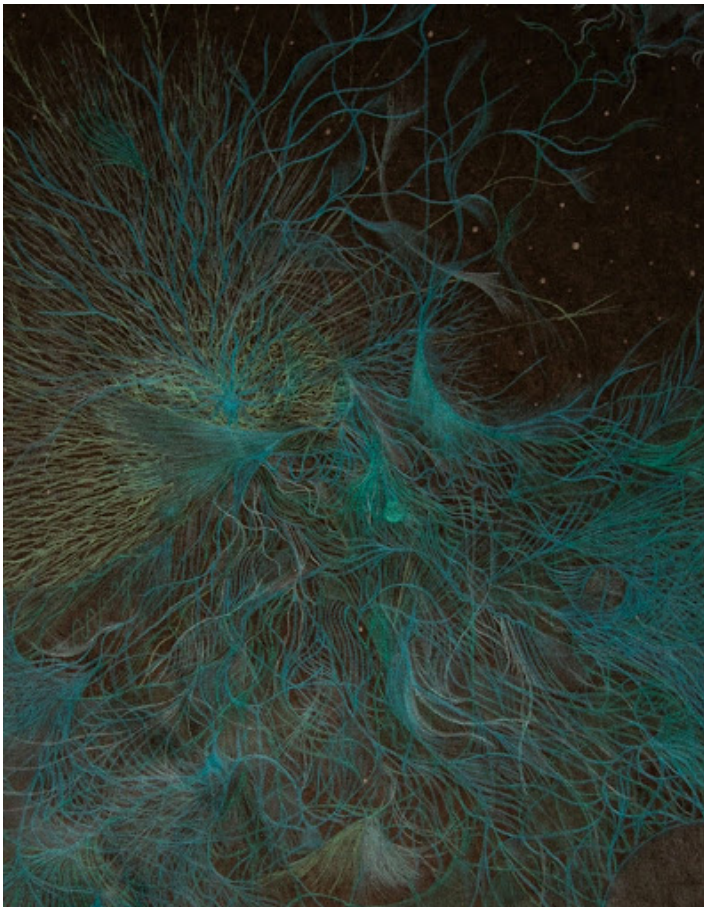




Implosión 5 and 6

IMPLOSIONS

ENTROPY IS THE TENDENCY OF ENERGY FOR EXPANSION.

CONCEPT:

QUANTUM PHYSICS PRINCIPLES

TRANSLATION TO A POETIC FRAMEWORK

FICTION - MOTIVATIONAL FANTASY

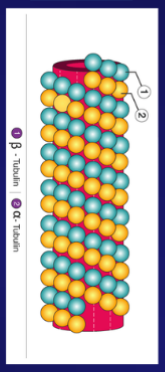
"WHAT DISTINGUISHES FICTION FROM ORDINARY EXPERIENCE IS NOT A LACK OF REALITY BUT A SURFEIT OF RATIONALITY."
- RANCIÊRE ON THE NINETH CHAPTER OF ARISTOTLE POETICS

MECHANIC

EXPRESSIONISM INFLUENCED BY THE NARRATIVE OF A COSMICAL BODY'S APPARITION.

INDUCED TRANCE METHOD - INVOCATION OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

MICROTUBULES



1- SELECT A RANDOM POINT ON THE BLACK PAPER OR CANVAS (COLLAPSE IN A VACUUM REPRESENTATION).
2- CREATE THE FIGURE OF A LITTLE STAR.
3 - EXPAND ITS EDGES IN THE FORM OF DIVERSE LINES AND SHAPES.
4- FORM THE INITIAL SKELETON, LEAVING SOME LOOSE ENDS.
5- CONTINUE THE NARRATIVE UNTIL SHAPING A GEOMETRICAL LANDSCAPE.

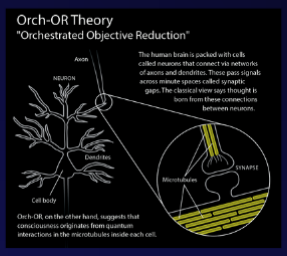
- I USED A MUSICAL PLAYLIST EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE FIRST SESSION OF EACH PIECE (IT WASN'T NECESSARY AFTER FINISHING THE FIRST SKELETON).
- NO TRACE WAS ERASED IN THE MAKING, REFLECTING A PICTORIAL DETERMINISM BASED ON THE COLLAPSE OF THE WAVE FUNCTION AND THE UNCERTAINTY PRINCIPLE.

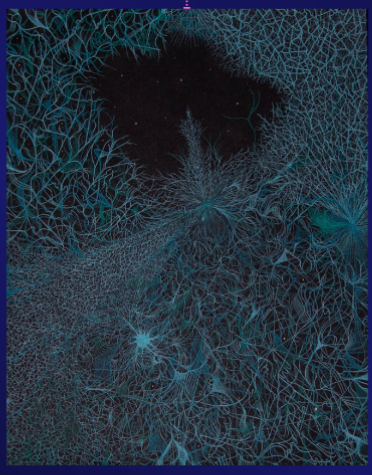
AN EXERCISE OF SPONTANEITY, GUIDED BY AN INTUITION BASED ON THE FORMULA:

$M_{\downarrow}(P_{\downarrow}+F) = X$

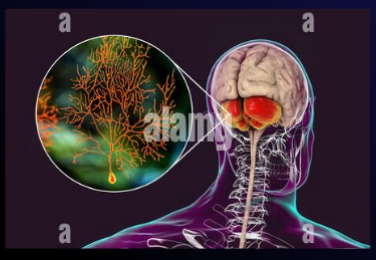
WHERE "M" IS THE MECHANIC POTENTIALIZED BY THE INTUITIVE VALUE INFLUENCED BY THE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF THE FIRST SESSION, WHICH IS MULTIPLIED BY THE NUMBER OF REFERENCED PREMISES SUMMED WITH THE MOTIVATIONAL FANTASY, RESULTING IN THE FINAL PIECE:

ORCHESTRATED OBJECTIVE REDUCTION





SOME CONCLUSIONS:



THE PIECES ENDED UP HAVING AN ASPECT OF A SPIDER WEB OR "PURKINJE" NEURONS, INSTEAD OF RESEMBLING A COSMICAL BODY AS INITIALLY ENVISIONED.
HOWEVER, I DON'T BELIEVE THE SYMMETRIES AND PATTERNS ARE COINCIDENTAL.

COULD THIS BE A KIND OF TOPOGRAPHY OF THE MIND?
A FAITHFUL REPRESENTATION OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE WAVE FUNCTION, BUT PERMEATED BY THE SELF?
IS THIS FORMULA APPLICABLE THROUGH A SCIENTIFIC METHOD, OR IS IT ALL JUST METAPHORICAL?

"Geometry will draw the soul toward truth and
create the spirit of philosophy." - Plato

[1]For more information on the conflict
go to:
nanoxiscorp.blogspot.com

[2]Flow state, also known as being "in the zone," is a mental state of complete absorption and focused attention, often resulting in heightened creativity, productivity, and a deep sense of enjoyment in the present moment.

[3]The double-slit experiment is a fundamental concept in quantum physics that demonstrates the wave-particle duality of particles, such as electrons and photons. In this experiment, particles are shot at a barrier with two slits. When not observed, they create an interference pattern as if they are waves. However, when observed or measured, they behave as individual particles, showing the dual nature of matter and the influence of observation on quantum behavior.

[4]Purkinje neurons are specialized cells found in the cerebellum of the brain. Named after the Czech anatomist Jan Evangelista Purkinje, these neurons play a crucial role in coordinating and regulating voluntary muscle movements. They receive signals from the cerebellar cortex and transmit inhibitory messages to the deep cerebellar nuclei, contributing to the fine-tuning and precision of motor control.